

A Profile of Dental Hygienists in North Dakota September 2000

In November of 1998, a survey of registered dental hygienists was conducted by the North Dakota Department of Health and the Office of Rural Health. The questionnaire was sent to 460 North Dakota registered dental hygienists in conjunction with their registration renewal. Three hundred eighty surveys were returned for a response rate of 83 percent. This data will serve as baseline to track the dental hygienist workforce trends in the state. A database of dental hygienists was created and will be updated every two years.

Summary findings:

(Findings represent only those dental hygienists who responded to the survey.)

Residence

More than one-half (43.4%) of the dental hygienists live in the state's major cities/metropolitan statistical areas. More than one-fourth (25.8%) reside in Bismarck and Fargo.

Bismarck	10.5%
Fargo	15.3%
Grand Forks	5.5%
Minot	4.2%
Moorhead, MN	3.4%
Wahpeton	4.5%

While 72.1 percent of the dental hygienists reside in North Dakota, 18.2 percent live in Minnesota. The remaining 9.7 percent of dental hygienists reside out-of-state and are distributed fairly evenly in 19 states.

Nearly one-half (46.4%) of the dental hygienists reside in five counties in the state.

Burleigh	10.3%
Cass	17.4%
Grand Forks	7.6%
Richland	5.8%
Ward	5.3%

Age

The age of dental hygienists ranged from 22 to 63. The average age was 37.02 years, and the median age was 37.49 years.

A breakdown of dental hygienists by age group follows:

21-30 years	22.9%
31-40 years	41.0%
41-50 years	33.2%
51-60 years	2.7%
61+ years	.3%

Employment Status

A majority of dental hygienists (91.6%) are currently working in positions that require they keep their dental hygienist registration current, while 0.8 percent are working in volunteer positions, and 7.7 percent are working in positions that do not require current registration.

Only 1.7 percent of dental hygienists were temporary employees at the primary work site, while 17 percent of dental hygienists were temporary employees at their secondary work site.

The most commonly cited reasons for inactive status were not working because of family reasons, employed in another field, and retired.

Primary Practice Employment

Location

Nearly one-half of the dental hygienists (45.1%) were employed in the state's major cities or metropolitan areas. More than one-fourth (28.2%) were employed in Bismarck and Fargo.

Bismarck	10.8%
Fargo	17.4%
Grand Forks	6.6%
Minot	5.8%
Moorhead, MN	4.5%

More than one-tenth (14.4%) of dental hygienists worked at a secondary site.

Hours

The range of hours worked at the primary employment site was from five to 50 hours. The average number of hours worked was 29 hours per week.

The range of hours worked at the secondary employment site was from two to 28 hours. The average number of hours worked was 10.5 hours per week.

A majority (81.4%) of dental hygienists felt they worked in dental hygiene "the right amount of hours." Only 11.3 percent felt they worked fewer hours than they wanted, and 7.2 percent felt they worked more hours than they wanted.

Procedures Performed

Nearly all dental hygienists are taking radiographs, performing infection control measures, performing oral hygiene treatment planning, scaling and polishing teeth, and providing root planning and soft tissue curettage. Other procedures are performed less frequently by dental hygienists.

Taking radiographs	99.4%
Performing infection control measures	100.0%
Taking impressions (for study casts, orthodontic retainers or mouth guards)	41.7%

Applying anticariogenic agents topically	72.0%
Providing oral hygiene treatment planning	96.8%
Applying acid-etching prior to sealant placement	67.1%
Placing/removing rubber dams	1.7%
Scaling and polishing teeth	99.4%
Performing root planning and soft tissue curettage	95.0%

Educational Level

Most dental hygienists (94.8%) currently hold associate degrees. Nearly one-tenth (9.0%) of dental hygienists hold bachelors degrees, with most being in areas other than dental hygiene.

Technical-vocational	9.9%
Associate degree	94.8%
Bachelors degree	9.0%
Masters degree	1.9%